



# LENA C. TAYLOR

Wisconsin State Senator • 4th District

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## Testimony of Senator Lena C Taylor

SB 379 – Notice of School Closings and Reopenings

Senate Committee on Education

March 25, 2010

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Honorable Chairman Lehman and members of the committee:

Thank you for taking testimony today on SB 379 relating to notification of school closing and reopenings. I am pleased to author this bill along with Rep. Penny Bernard-Schraber of Appleton.

Currently, the law allows a local district superintendent to close a school for inclement weather or because of a threat to the health or public safety of the students. Local health officers and the Department of Health Services (DHS) may also close a school to control epidemics or outbreaks. However, this closing is not required to be reported to the Department of Public Instruction.

This bill requires a school board to notify DPI of the closing of the school within 24 hours and for what reason and also requires notification that the school has reopened along with the number of days the school was closed. These notifications only apply to closures related to health or safety concerns, not for weather related closings.

The H1N1 pandemic we experienced is the reason this bill was offered. We need to give the Department of Public Instruction and the Department of Health Services information so they can work collaboratively with the Center for Disease Control in light of such situations. The Department of Public Instruction must be able to communicate accurate, up to date information to the Center for Disease Control throughout the school year.

I urge the committee's support of the bill. Thank you.